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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: June 11, 1956
Taipei, Taiwan.

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SUBJECT: Chinese Communist Airfields

PARTICIPANTS: Yu Ta Wei, Minister of National Defense, Taipei, Taiwan
Ambassador Rankin
FE - William J. Sebald, Deputy Assistant Secretary

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During my call on Defense Minister Yu Ta Wei, the conversation turned on the question of Chinese Communist airfields on the mainland. The Minister took me to a large wall map on which were plotted the airfield complexes presently built or being built on the Chinese mainland opposite Taiwan. The Minister pointed out that it had been possible with existing reconnaissance aircraft to keep informed fairly well concerning the progress in construction of fields within approximately 150 miles of the coast. Recently, however, it had become apparent that the Chinese Communists were building new complexes of fields in depth, some of which were as much as 500-750 miles from the coast. In consequence, it had now become impossible for the Chinese Air Force to undertake the necessary reconnaissance in depth and no reliable information was therefore available concerning the progress of construction of the more distant fields.

Minister Yu Ta Wei said he hoped that it would be possible for the United States to furnish appropriate reconnaissance aircraft so that the present veil could be lifted and reliable intelligence obtained.

I commented upon the ominous pattern which the Chinese Communist airfield complexes presented and said I hoped that our MAAG people would be kept informed of all information available to the GRC. The Minister said that copies of all photographs are regularly forwarded to our military authorities.

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